AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended)   A method for an enterprise system to evaluate and rank exact and probabilistic search rules for searching a computer database of records according to an efficiency measure of each search rule, comprising the steps of:

implementing a plurality of search rules that include one or more data elements, wherein a ~~the~~ combination of data elements in each rule is configured to identify a target record;

arranging the search rules in a rank order of execution;

executing the search rules according to the rank order to retrieve the target record;
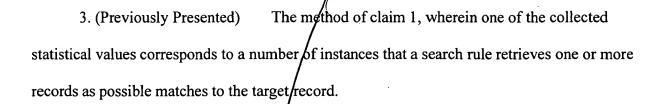
retrieving a plurality of records identified by the search rules as possible matches to the target record;

collecting a plurality of statistical values related to the performance of each search rule executed in attempt to locate the target record; and

calculating an efficiency measure for each search rule using the collected values, where the efficiency measure measures how efficient a corresponding search rule is in finding a match with the target record; and

adjusting the rank order of the search rules based on the efficiency measure for each search rule ~~upon analysis of the collected statistics.~~

2. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule is executed to search for the target record.

3. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves one or more records as possible matches to the target record.

4. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to an elapsed time value equivalent to an amount of time spent executing a search rule to retrieve a record.

5. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves a record previously retrieved by a previously executed search rule.

6. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves a record that was not retrieved by a previously executed search rule.

7. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves a plurality of records, wherein the plurality of records are subsequently determined to correspond to the target record.

8. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to the number of records of the plurality of retrieved records determined not to be the target record.

9. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the enterprise system determines the efficiency for each search rule according to the collected statistics for the search rule, and wherein the rank order of the search rules are arranged in descending order by efficiency.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a user of the enterprise system determines the efficiency based upon the collected statistics and arranges the rank order of the search rules according to the determined efficiency.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the enterprise system and search rules are executed in a computer.

12. (Currently Amended)   A computer readable medium having a program for evaluating and ranking exact and probabilistic search rules, the program comprising logic configured to perform the steps of:

implementing a plurality of search rules that include one or more data elements, wherein the combination of data elements in each rule is configured to identify a target record;

arranging the search rules in a rank order of execution;

executing the search rules according to the rank order to retrieve the target record;

retrieving a plurality of records identified by the search rules as possible matches to the target record;

collecting a plurality of statistical values related to the performance of each search rule executed in attempt to locate the target record;

calculating an efficiency measure for each search rule using the collected values, where the efficiency measure measures how efficient a corresponding search rule is in finding a match with the target record; and

4

adjusting the rank order of the search rules based on the efficiency measure for each search rule ~~upon analysis of the collected statistics.~~

13. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances a that search rule is executed to search for the target record.

14. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves one or more records as possible matches to the target record.

15. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to an elapsed time value equivalent to an amount of time spent executing a search rule to retrieve a record.

16. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves a record previously retrieved by a previously executed search rule.

17. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves a record that was not retrieved by a previously executed search rule.

18. (Previously Presented)   The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to a number of instances that a search rule retrieves a plurality of records, wherein the plurality of records are subsequently determined to correspond to the target record.

19. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein one of the collected statistical values corresponds to the number of records of the plurality of retrieved records determined not to be the target record.

20. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the enterprise system determines the efficiency for each search rule according to the collected statistics for the search rule, and wherein the rank order of the search rules are arranged in descending order by efficiency.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ system of claim 12, wherein ~~the~~ a user of the enterprise system determines the efficiency based upon the collected statistics and arranges the rank order of the search rules according to the determined efficiency.

22. (Cancelled)

23-39. (Withdrawn)

40. (New) The method of claim 1, where calculating an efficiency measure further comprises calculating a probability that a corresponding search rule will find a match.

41. (New) The method of claim 1, where calculating an efficiency measure further comprises calculating a percentage of rule firings in which a corresponding search rule finds a possible match.

42. (New) The method of claim 1, where calculating an efficiency measure further comprises calculating a percentage of possible matches found by a rule that are determined to be actual matches.